Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-2015

Outcome 3 - Higher Education, Reform & Support

Department of Education Question No. ED0404_15

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question

3.5 Investment in Higher Education Research

Is parliamentary approval required for the Minister to choose to spend less than the maximum specified by the Higher Education Support Act 2003 on the: (a) Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme (b) International Post Graduate Research (c) Joint Research Engagement Programme (d) Research Infrastructure Block Grants (e) Research Training (f) Sustainable Research Excellence (g) Australian Post Graduate Awards

Answer

No, for all items (a) to (g) the Minister can spend less than the maximum available for the scheme.

The Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme (which terminated in June 2014), Joint Research Engagement Programme, Research Infrastructure Block Grants, Research Training Scheme and Sustainable Research Excellence programmes are funded under Division 41-Other Grants of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA). The Other Grants Guidelines (Research) 2012 set out the applicable detail for the grants. Under the guidelines the Minister or Minister's delegate can decide to spend any amount of money up to the maximum amount available in a given year.

The International Post Graduate Research (IPR) and Australian Post Graduate Awards (APA) programmes are funded under Division 46 – Commonwealth Scholarships of HESA. The Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2012 set out the applicable detail for the grants. Under the guidelines the Minister or Minister's delegate must distribute funding according to the formula specified in the Scholarship Guidelines. The formula requires a minimum amount of funding to be allocated for IPR and APA places already allocated in the previous 3 years. The Minister has discretion to award funding for any new, commencing IPR and APA places each year.

SQ14-002494